

Message Text

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SUBJECT: IZVESTIYA ON "UNITY OF SOVIET CULTURE" AND SOVIET JEWRY

REF: MOSCOW 20096

1. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. BEGIN SUMMARY. AN ARTICLE IN IZVESTIYA FOR DEC 23 STRESSES THE UNITY OF SOVIET CULTURE, NOTES THAT SOVIET JEWISH CULTURE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF IT, AND ATTACKS "ZIONISTS" WHO ATTEMPT TO SUGGEST THAT JEWS IN THE USSR DO NOT ENJOY THE SAME RIGHTS AS DO OTHER SOVIET CITIZENS. THE ARTICLE ALSO DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF AN "INTERNATIONAL" JEWISH CULTURE, AND ATTEMPTS TO LINK ZIONISM TO IMPERIALISM. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE ARTICLE IS, AT LEAST IN PART, A RESPONSE TO THE ATTEMPT BY MOSCOW JEWISH DISSIDENTS TO HOLD A SYMPOSIUM ON THE CULTURE OF SOVIET JEWRY. END SUMMARY. END CONFIDENTIAL.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IZVESTIYA FOR DEC 23 DEVOTES ONE-HALF PAGE TO AN ARTICLE BY K. ORLOVSKIY AND S. POLIN (ASSUME DEPT HAS TEXT VIA FBIS), ENTITLED THE "UNBREAKABLE STRENGTH OF SOVIET CULTURE". THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FIRST PART OF THE ARTICLE IS AN EXPOSITION IN STANDARD TERMS OF THE ORIGINS OF SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY, ESPECIALLY CULTURAL POLICY WHICH ENABLES EACH NATIONALITY TO FIND THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE ITS OWN CULTURAL IDENTITY WITHIN THE FRAME-
WORK OF SOCIALISM. BREZHNEV IS QUOTED ONCE AND LENIN AT SEVERAL POINTS IN AN EFFORT TO SHOW THE BASIS FOR THE FULL

CULTURAL EQUALITY THAT EXISTS IN THE USSR (ALTHOUGH THE "SUPPORT FROM THE . . . RUSSIAN PEOPLE" IS MENTIONED). THE ROLE OF THE PARTY IS REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED.

3. THE MAIN PORTION OF THE ARTICLE IS DEVOTED TO AN EXPOSITION ON HOW COMPLETELY SOVIET JEWRY IS INTEGRATED INTO SOVIET CULTURE. ZIONISM IS PRESENTED AS THE MAIN DANGER TO COMPLETE JEWISH INTEGRATION INTO SOVIET LIFE; AND A DOCUMENT DATING FROM 1898 IS QUOTED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ZIONISM IS ANTITHETICAL TO SOCIALISM. ZIONISM IS DESCRIBED AS ATTEMPTING TO PLAY UP THE "SPECIAL POSITION" OF JEWS AND AS BEING DIRECTED AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. THE AUTHORS QUOTE A SERIES OF STATISTICS ON JEWISH REPRESENTATION IN SOVIET LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES, THE NUMBER OF JEWS WHO HAVE WON MEDALS, JEWISH CULTURAL MUSICAL AND LITERARY RESOURCES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF STUDYING YIDDISH. WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO SUGGEST THAT THERE IS A "JEWISH QUESTION" IN THE USSR ARE DISMISSED. THE ARTICLE DENOUNCES ZIONIST PROPAGANDA THAT FORMERLY SOUGHT TO CONVINCE SOVIET JEWS TO LEAVE THE USSR FOR ISRAEL AND NOW IN ADDITION TRIES TO PLAY UP THE NOTION THAT THERE EXISTS A SPECIAL, INTERNATIONAL IDENTITY OF JEWS ALL OVER THE WORLD. ALSO CRITICIZED ARE ATTEMPTS FROM ABROAD TO ENCOURAGE SOVIET JEWS (ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG) TO STUDY HEBREW ("OLD JEWISH" IN THE ARTICLE) IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE AN IDENTITY WITH ISRAEL. THE ARTICLE OBSERVES THAT SOVIET JEWS ENJOY THE SAME FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AS DO BELIEVERS OF OTHER FAITHS, ALTHOUGH IT ADDS THAT ONLY 3 TO 6 PERCENT OF THE JEWS IN THE RSFSR AND THE UKRAINE ARE BELIEVERS.

4. THE CLOSING PORTION OF THE ARTICLE CRITICIZES ATTEMPTS
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BY ZIONISTS AND THEIR IMPERIALIST ALLIES TO INFLUENCE THE JEWS OF THE USSR, AS INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THEREBY CONTRARY TO THE CSCE FINAL ACT AND THE UN CHARTER. THE UNGA RESOLUTION WHICH CALLS ZIONISM A FORM OF RACISM IS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. ZIONISM HERE IS EQUATED WITH RACISM, AND IT IS NOTED THAT THERE EXISTS MUCH DISCRIMINATION IN ISRAEL. THE ARTICLE'S PERORATION ALSO NOTES THAT ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM NEED EACH OTHER, AND THAT AMERICAN ZIONISTS ARE PARTICULARLY CLOSELY LINKED WITH IMPERIALIST CIRCLES. END
UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT. THE THEMES THAT THE AUTHORS OF THE IZVESTIYA PIECE TAKE UP ARE NOT NEW, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE MORE FORCEFULLY AND AUTHORITATIVELY EVOKED THAN IS COMMONLY SEEN. THE TIMING IS PROBABLY RELATED AT LEAST IN PART TO THE RECENT ATTEMPT BY MOSCOW'S JEWISH REFUSENIKS TO ORGANIZE A SYMPOSIUM ON THE POSITION OF SOVIET JEWS. THIS ARTICLE ENDEAVORS TO SHOW THAT THERE IS NO PROBLEM AND THAT THOSE

WHO MIGHT TRY TO PROVE OTHERWISE ARE THE AGENTS OF
IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM.

6. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ABORTIVE SYMPOSIUM IS ALL OVER
MOSCOW'S INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES, JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ALIKE.
WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING TO WHAT EXTENT KNOWLEDGE OF
THIS AFFAIR HAS BEEN DISSEMINATED THROUGHOUT THE USSR
EITHER BY WORD OF MOUTH OR THANKS TO FOREIGN BROADCASTS,
BUT THE APPEARANCE OF A HALF-PAGE ARTICLE IN THE AUTHORITATIVE
AND NATIONALLY AVAILABLE IZVESTIAYA IS INDICATIVE OF SOVIET
SENSITIVITY IN THIS AREA. END CONFIDNETIAL.
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